



## ***News Release***

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WWII SOLDIER IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army 1st Lt. John E. Terpning, of Mount Prospect, Ill., will be buried on April 3, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington D.C. On May 7, 1944, Terpning was a pilot of a B-24D Liberator that departed Nadzab, New Guinea on a bombing mission. Due to mechanical troubles, the B-24D was delayed in departing the airbase and was unable to join the formation after takeoff. Neither the aircraft, Terpning, nor the nine other crewmen aboard the plane were seen after takeoff. In 1946, the War Department declared all ten men to be presumed dead.

In 1973, a Papua New Guinea Forest Department official reported a wartime aircraft in the mountains northeast of the city of Lae. In October 1973, a team of Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) responded to the report and visited the site, where they found aircraft wreckage that corresponded to that of a B-24D. At that time the RAAF recovered possible human remains, which were transferred to the U.S. Army Mortuary in Tachikawa, Japan; however, given the limited technology at the time, no human remains were individually identified. In 1974, the remains were buried as a group at Arlington National Cemetery.

In April 2008, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team was sent to investigate and survey the crash site. The team recovered aircraft wreckage, including a radio call sign data plate that matched the aircraft, from a B-24D and additional remains.

To identify the remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Terpning's brother.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. At the end of the war, the U.S. government was unable to recover and identify approximately 79,000 Americans. Today, more than 73,000 are unaccounted-for from the conflict.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

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